

Message Text

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51

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OMB-01 ACDA-19 IO-14 CIAE-00 DODE-00

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PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 NIC-01 DRC-01 /139 W

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R 200800Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY SOFIA

TO AMCONGEN MUNICH

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 7160

AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

C O N F I D E N T I A L SOFIA 1421

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, BU, CZ

SUBJECT: TRAVELS OF ZHIVKOV

REF: MUNICH 1847 (NOTAL): SOFIA 1326, 1384, AND 1406 (NOTAL)

1. IN REPLY REFTEL (MUNICH), SHORTLY AFTER THE BREZHNEV VISIT IN SEPTEMBER AND WITHOUT BEING SPECIFIC, BULGARIAN OFFICIALS AND EVEN ZHIVKOV HIMSELF BEGAN TELLING VARIOUS DIPLOMATS THAT HE, ZHIVKOV, WOULD BE DOING A GOOD DEAL OF TRAVELLING THIS FALL. AT THIS TIME HE WAS ALREADY SCHEDULED TO GO TO AUSTRIA. IT WAS BROADLY RUMORED THAT HIS TRAVELS WOULD INCLUDE NORTH KOREA, MONGOLIA, IRAQ, HUNGARY, POLAND AND POSSIBLY CZECHOSLOVAKIA. THEREFORE, ZHIVKOV'S TRIP TO PRAGUE ANNOUNCED JUST A DAY BEFORE HIS DEPARTURE , DID NOT COME AS A GREAT SURPRISE TO OBSERVERS HERE.

2. DURING FIRST WEEK IN OCTOBER, CHAIRMAN OF CHAMBER
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OF COMMERCE IN TALKING ABOUT BULGARIAN EXHIBIT TO

OPEN IN PRAGUE, SAID EXHIBIT WAS VERY IMPORTANT TO BULGARIA AND HE HOPED A HIGH LEVEL BULGARIAN OFFICIAL WOULD OPEN IT. HE REFUSED TO SPECULATE ON WHOM IT MIGHT BE. IF EXHIBIT NEEDS BOOST AND ZHIVKOV ALREADY SCHEDULED TO VISIT CZECHOSLOVAKIA FOR OTHER REASONS, THEN TIMING SEEMS APPROPRIATE.

3. REASONS BEHIND THE TRAVELS OF ZHIVKOV ARE ALSO BROADLY DISCUSSED AND SPECULATED ON. ZHIVKOV IS INCREASINGLY PLAYING THE ROLE OF SPOKESMAN FOR MOSCOW "SOCIALISM" AND THERE IS SOME THIN EVIDENCE THAT BREZHNEV IS ENCOURAGING HIM IN THIS ROLE. SPECULATION WHICH CENTERS ON THIS CONSLUSTION, IS THAT BREZHNEV HAS SELECTED ZHIVKOV AS THE MAN TO EXPLAIN DETENTE TO NORTH KOREANS AND ATTEMPT TO PERSUADE THEM TO SOFTEN THEIR HARD LINE POSITION AND GET IN STEP WITH THE REST OF THE SOCIALIST WORLD. AS FOR THE OTHER EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES, ZHIVKOV WHO RUNS WHAT HAS BEEN CALLED A MODEL SOCIALIST COUNTRY PARTICULARLY WITH REGARD TO ITS RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION, CAN BE EXPECTED TO GIVE THE OTHERS SOME POINTERS ON THE MEANING OF SOCIALIST UNITY AND SOLIDARITY. IT IS NOW BELIEVED THAT THE IRAQI TRIP IS A RETURN VISIT BUT ONE WHICH COULD ALSO BE USED TO PROMOTE SOVIET FOREGIN POLICY.

4. RUMORS OF AN UPCOMING COMMUNIST WORLD CONFERENCE ALSO ARE CIRCULATING HERE. THERE ARE THOSE WHO BELIEVE THAT ZHIVKOV'S MAIN TASK WILL CENTER ON RECRUITING FOR SUCH A CONGRESS. WHEN THIS THEORY WAS TRIED ON A KNOWLEDGEABLE COMMUNIST HE SAID PARTICIPATION AT A POSSIBLE CONFERENCE "TO BE HELD SOME FIVE YEARS FROM NOW, NOT LIKELY."

5. AS ZHIVKOV'S VISITS MATERIZLIZE, IF THEY DO, THE CENTER PURPOSE OF HIS ACTIVITY MAY BECOME CLEARER, BUT AS OF NOW WE HAVE NOTHING BUT SPECULATION BASED PRIMARILY ON PROVENCIAL GOSSIP.

6. TO COMMENT ON RFE BROAD ASTS TO BULGARIA - THE MOST GALLING ASPECT OF BROADCASTS FOR BULGARIAN OFFICIALS IS PERSONAL ATTACKS ON ZHIVKOV. APPARENTLY, THESE ATTACKS

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TOUCH A VERY SORE NERVE AND MAKE HIM FURIOUS. HOW MANY, IF ANY, OF SUCH ATTACKS THERE HAVE BEEN IN RECENT MONTHS, I DO NOT KNOW, BUT I WOULD SUGGEST THAT THEY MAY WELL HAVE REACHED THE COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE POINT AS FAR AS OUR RELATIONS ARE CONCERNED.

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